

**EAST OREGONIAN**  
Founded October 16, 1875

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**OUR VIEW**

# Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

**A tip of the hat to the dedicated, caring and inspiring teachers in our local school districts.**

This is teacher appreciation week in the United States and a good chance to offer our gratitude for the time spent educating and helping shepherd our children through their formative years.



Teaching is often considered a calling, and that's a fair assessment. Who would take responsibility for a roomful of someone else's kids every day if they didn't feel some sort of compulsion toward the duty? But it's also a serious profession that demands serious professionals.

The challenges of education in 2017 are far different from those of past decades, as technology brings new dimensions nearly every

day and family dynamics have radically shifted. There's a lot of talking and planning that can be done at the 30,000 foot level, but as the bell rings each morning it's the teacher in the classroom who determines the quality of education each student will receive.

From the kindergarten teacher giving the first reading, writing and arithmetic lessons all the way up to the high school teacher instilling the deep learning that will inform a pupil's life and career, the K-12 experience is filled with moments sparked by educators. We're lucky to have so many good ones in our communities.

On Monday the InterMountain ESD will recognize this year's Crystal Apple award winners, a prize reserved for the very best in the area's school districts. We will feature those teachers in Tuesday's newspaper.

**A kick in the pants to the city of Echo, where city councilors are threatening to use eminent domain to condemn ten acres of a resident's riverside ranch.**

We spotlighted the story of Michael Yunker in the paper earlier this week, and most readers came to his defense. It's easy to see eminent domain as a tool for the powerful and government-aligned to take what they want from us lowly peons in the way of progress.

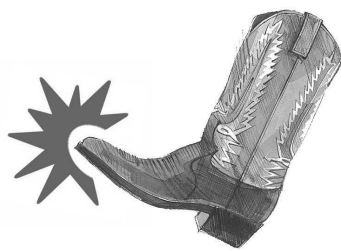
Yes, sometimes eminent domain is necessary to complete the massive infrastructure projects required to fuel our modern world. In those rare cases, eminent domain can be a reasonable use of taxpayer dollars as government attempts to find the most efficient way to build a highway or an energy corridor, an airport or a railroad.

But the case in Echo is not that clear. The city has known it has had a problem for a decade off, that whole time running afoul of state rules on effluents and in the process fouling the Umatilla River that snakes through town.

Yet the city kept kicking the can down the road, asking and receiving extensions from the Department of Environmental Quality. But the extensions have now likely run out, and the city is facing a problem that needs fixing.

There is no easy choice and of course taxpayers will be on the hook either way. They will be tasked with paying off a more expensive debt if the city leaves Yunker's property be and builds elsewhere. If they condemn and take it, they will usurp the liberty of a longstanding resident and engender a loss of neighborly virtue.

It's poor planning and communication that got us to this position, and that's worth a pants-kicking.



Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of publisher Kathryn Brown, managing editor Daniel Wattenburger, and opinion page editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

**YOUR VIEWS**

## No fluff in the Pendleton fire bond

In response to Kelly Temple's suggestion that the Pendleton's proposed fire station is inappropriate and overpriced for our community, I invite anyone to make the effort to visit with our fire chief and review what is being proposed. Chief Ciraulo will be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Temple suggests that because Boise's 2014 bond issue built new and remodeled fire and training facilities for \$76 per resident, Pendleton should be able to do the same in 2018. That would get us a new fire station at about \$1.3 million, a totally unrealistic figure to design, build and furnish a new facility at today's prices in a location that will improve response times for our citizens, and provide the necessary lifesaving equipment included in Pendleton's fire bond proposal.

There are numerous variables that go into the cost of any new facility. A few examples include whether land acquisition is necessary for the project or is there city-owned land available for the project; does Boise's facilities include smaller stations like ours on Southgate, or does it include larger facilities such as what is proposed in our bond issue that is the primary dispatch and administrative center necessary to house the majority of the men and women firefighter/paramedics and reserves; what are the site development and modification to existing infrastructure needs and regional construction cost variables?

Boise's \$17 million bond in 2014 included the cost for the training facility at \$6.8 million. Current information on their website lists the cost of this facility

at \$11.5 million for Phase I. The costs for the proposed Pendleton fire station were developed over a year's time in a public process that included input from citizens, city staff and elected officials.

The information is public, posted on the fire station web site, and has been discussed in more than 30 public meetings. There is no fluff in Pendleton's proposal. Improvements covered in the fire bond issue are reasonable and totally appropriate for our community. Please vote yes for our fire bond.

**Chuck Wood**  
Pendleton

## Fire chief worked hard to craft right-sized bond

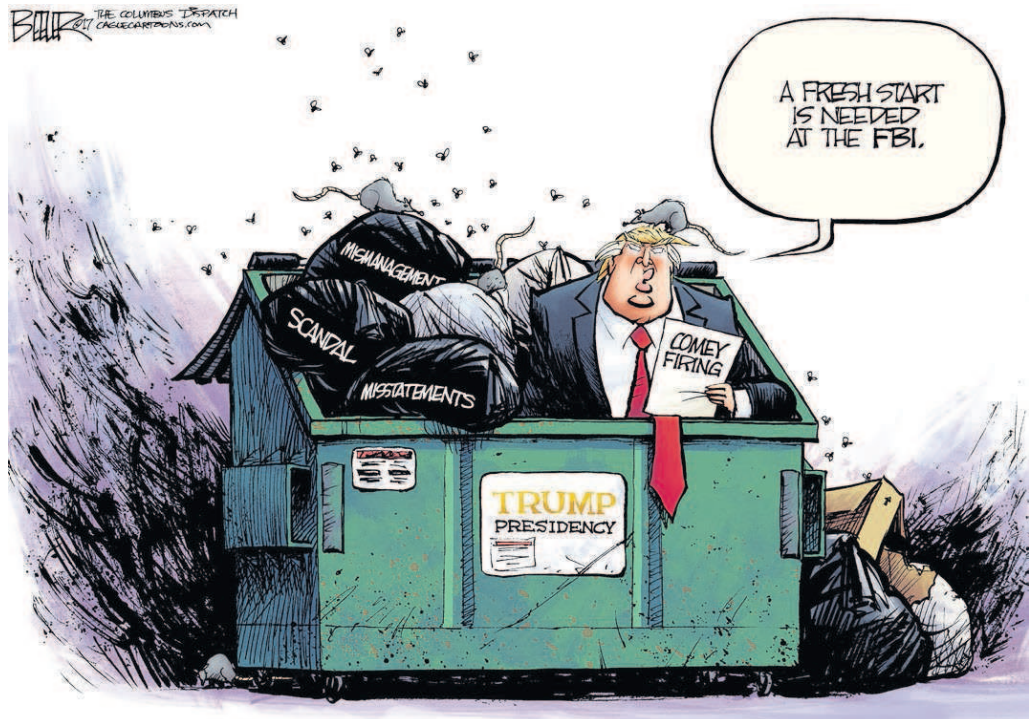
There appears to be a general consensus in our in our community regarding the need for a new fire station, but disagreement on the best location and design.

Our Lions Club has worked with Chief Mike Ciraulo and I have been impressed with his professionalism and dedication. After listening to him talk about the various options for a new fire station, I am also confident that he has done an admirable job in analyzing these options. Unfortunately, there is no perfect answer to this challenge; all options involve tradeoffs. I am confident that Chief Ciraulo has carefully considered current operational requirements, welfare of our firefighters, future needs of our community and responsibility to the taxpayers in recommending this option.

Please join me in voting yes for the new fire station.

**Dwight Johnson**  
Pendleton

**OTHER VIEWS**



## The Comey canning's easy tells

With Donald Trump, the tells are always easy.

When the president says, "I'm, like, a smart person," you know he nurses deep insecurities about his intelligence. When he says, "I'm really rich," you know that he knows that you know that, really, he probably isn't.

And when he writes, as he did in his letter to the now-former FBI director, James B. Comey, that "while I greatly appreciate you informing me, on three separate occasions, that I am not under investigation," you know what keeps him up at night, too.

That wasn't the only tell in Trump's Comey canning. First there was its abruptness. Rod Rosenstein, deputy attorney general as of two weeks ago, delivered his memorandum detailing Comey's misfeasance in the Hillary Clinton email saga on Tuesday. Trump fired the director the same day.

Come again? This is the same administration that waited 18 long days to fire a national security adviser profoundly vulnerable to Russian blackmail. Why? Because, as press secretary Sean Spicer explained earlier this week, the White House felt it owed Michael Flynn an "element of due process."

For Comey, not so much. He learned of his dismissal from a TV screen, while delivering a speech to bureau employees. Firings on "The Apprentice" had more class and ceremony than this.

Then there is Rosenstein's memo, which makes a solid case that Comey bungled nearly every aspect of the Clinton investigation — a revelation to nobody in Washington, left or right, except perhaps Comey himself. Nor was there any mystery about any of this when Trump gave the director his very public blessing at a White House ceremony in January, resisting the advice of prominent conservative voices to fire him back then.

But if the memo broke no new ground, there was something crassly novel about the political uses to which the administration was willing to put Rosenstein and his reputation for ethical behavior.

In a CNN interview Tuesday, Kellyanne Conway stressed Rosenstein's service as U.S. attorney in Maryland under Barack Obama, along with the Senate's 94-6 vote to confirm him. This is another tell, since the ordinary practice of this White House is to impugn the motives of anyone suspected of enjoying the favor of Democrats. Just look at Sean Spicer's Tuesday denigration of the former acting attorney general Sally Yates as an alleged Hillary hack for her prescient warnings to the White House about Flynn.

In other words, the White House needed the cover of an honorable man making an honest case against Comey to disguise its own case against him, which is neither honorable nor honest. How do we know? By following @realDonaldTrump on Twitter.

"F.B.I. Director Comey was the best thing that ever happened to Hillary Clinton in that he gave her a free pass for many bad deeds!" the president wrote May 2. "The phony Trump/Russia story was an excuse used by the Democrats as justification for losing the election. Perhaps Trump just ran a great campaign?"

Tell: After the president publicly impugned



**BRET STEPHENS**  
Comment

his own FBI director, it meant Rosenstein's memo was a pro forma, pretextual exercise.

Tell: When the president boasts about his great campaign, you know he's less than sure about just how great it really was.

Tell: When the president calls news "fake" or a story "phony," you know the truth quotient is likely to be high. And, again, you know he knows you know it.

All the more so thanks to reporting from *The Times*' Matthew Rosenberg and Matt Apuzzo, who revealed Wednesday that Comey had only recently asked Rosenstein

## The riddle wrapped in an enigma is Russia.

"for a significant increase in resources for the bureau's investigation into Russia's interference in the presidential election." For the record, the Justice Department denies the claim.

For the administration's apologists, the fallback line is that the Russia investigation will continue no matter who succeeds Comey. That might be credible if, say, the former New York Police Department commissioner Ray Kelly gets the job. And if Chris Christie or Rudy Giuliani gets it?

In all this, the riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma is Russia.

Golf courses: Russia. Mike Flynn's lies to the vice president: Russia. Jeff Sessions' lies to the Senate: Russia. Paul Manafort, Carter Page and Roger Stone: Russia. WikiLeaks: Russia. Donald Trump Jr.: Russia. The Bayrock Group: Russia. Erik Prince's diplomatic back channel: Russia.

No one piece in this (partial) list is incriminating. And with Trump, the line between incompetence and nefariousness, misjudgment and misdirection, is usually a blurry one.

Still, Jim Comey's firing now brings two points into high relief. First, the administration is not being truthful when it claims the director was dismissed for what he did last summer. Second, Donald Trump is afraid. A president who seeks to hide a scandal may be willing to risk an uproar.

*Bret Stephens won a Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 2013. He began working as a columnist at The New York Times in April.*

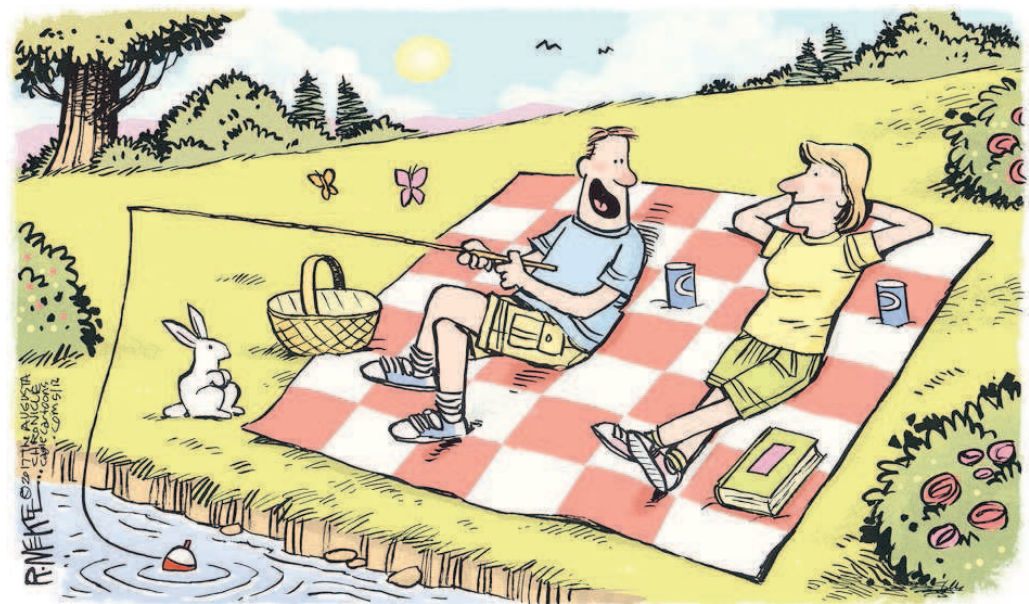
**Editor's note:** Bret Stephens has made quite a splash, jumping last month from the *Wall Street Journal* to the *New York Times*.

Known for his strong neoconservative views, Stephens helped shape the *Journal* editorial page, where he was deputy editorial-page editor and, for 11 years, a foreign affairs columnist.

Before that, Stephens was editor in chief of *The Jerusalem Post*. At *The Post* he oversaw the paper's news, editorial and digital operations and its international editions, and also wrote a weekly column. He has reported from around the world and interviewed scores of world leaders.

Mr. Stephens is the author of "America in Retreat: The New Isolationism and the Coming Global Disorder," released in November 2014.

He is the recipient of numerous awards and distinctions, including two honorary doctorates and the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for commentary. He will be a new addition to the *East Oregonian* editorial page.



The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. Send letters to managing editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.